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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Fifty-third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1278th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 4 August 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ABOUL NASR

later: Mr. YUTZIS

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 4) (continued)

Fourteenth periodic report of Cyprus (CERD/C/299/Add.19; HRI/CORE/1/Add.28/Rev.1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Eftychiou, Ms. Loizidou and Mr. Kestoras (Cyprus) took places at the Committee table.

2. Mr. EFTYCHIOU (Cyprus) said that the Turkish invasion of 1974 had been a calamity for his country. He nevertheless reaffirmed his Government's attachment to the promotion and protection of human rights, to the dignity of the human person, irrespective of ethnic origin, and in particular, to the principles and objectives set out in the Convention. In practice, that commitment to human rights had been manifested by using the Rome Convention to draft the relevant provisions of the Constitution of Cyprus, part II of which contained a very extensive Bill of Rights. His country, which was a party to all the internatical human rights instruments for which bodies had been established to monitor their implementation, had proceeded to legislate accordingly. Under article 169 (3) of the Constitution, the force of ratified international conventions was superior to national law.

3. The information contained in the report under consideration pertained only to the territory of the Republic under the effective control of his Government; 37 per cent of the territory of the Republic had been under Turkish military occupation since 1974. As a result, the Government was prevented from ensuring the implementation of the international conventions throughout the territory under its sovereign jurisdiction. As early as 8 April 1975, the Committee had adopted its first decision on Cyprus and had thereafter repeatedly expressed its concern about the unacceptable conditions prevailing in the occupied area of Cyprus. Thus, the support expressed by the Committee in its decision XXVII of 1983 had greatly encouraged the people and Government of Cyprus to continue to strive for respect for the human rights of all the people of Cyprus. Similarly, the authorities welcomed the Committee's General Recommendation XXII (49) adopted on 16 August 1996 concerning the issue of refugees and displaced persons. Unfortunately, since the submission of Cyprus's previous report to the Committee, the situation in the country had further deteriorated. The few hundred Greek and Maronite Cypriots who were still living in the occupied area were now obliged by the occupation regime to obtain and pay for exit and entry "visas" in order to travel to and from the occupied area.

4. In addition, the illegal occupation regime was now demanding recognition of its sovereignty before consenting to even commence negotiations for a solution to the problem of Cyprus. His Government was committed to a peaceful solution of the conflict and expressed to the Committee its thanks for the assistance and cooperation it had received from the Committee in its efforts to achieve effective implementation of the Convention.

5. Ms. LOIZIDOU (Cyprus) reaffirmed the importance which her country attached to the promotion of human rights safeguarded through the elimination of all forms of discrimination, whether based on race or national or ethnic origin.

6. In preparing the report under consideration, the Cypriot authorities had followed the Committee's revised guidelines, had taken due note of the observations made during the discussion of the previous report (CERD/C/263/Add.1) and had endeavoured to provide responses to the questions asked by members of the Committee.

7. The current report had been drafted by a committee composed of officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice and Public Order, Education and Culture, and Labour and Social Insurance and from the Office of the Attorney-General and the Office of the Ombudsman. The committee had been chaired by the Law Commissioner, who was responsible for ensuring that Cyprus's legislation was in conformity with international human rights instruments and that the authorities fulfilled their obligations under the international instruments to which Cyprus was a party.

8. In accordance with the suggestions and recommendations made by the Committee following its consideration of the previous report, the Committee's concluding observations and the previous report had been widely publicized in Cyprus, having been forwarded to the media, national institutions and agencies, and non-governmental human rights organizations.

9. She would like to inform the Committee of a number of new developments which had occurred during the period following the submission of the current report.

10. Cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had continued, in the context of the preparation of the Bill providing for the protection of refugees, which would soon be submitted to the Council of Ministers (paragraph 6 of the report).

11. With regard to the condemnation of any policy or practice of racial segregation (paragraph 9 of the report), her Government was still prevented, by the use of force and because of Turkey's continuing illegal military occupation of 37 per cent of the territory of the Republic, from applying the provisions of the Convention in the part of Cyprus occupied by Turkey.

12. The observations made by the Committee on Law No. 11 (III) of 1992 (paragraphs 11 and 18 of the report) concerning the words "intentionally", "acts or activities" and "are likely to cause discrimination" in the first paragraph and the word "only" in the fourth paragraph had been duly noted by the competent authorities who, after serious consideration, had accepted the Committee's recommendations and were proceeding with the introduction of the necessary amendments. The Law also covered the penalization of the expression of ideas contrary to the Convention through the electronic media. In that connection, her Government had participated in the Seminar on the role of the

Internet with regard to the provisions of the Convention, and the proposal of the Cypriot representative that the Committee should include reference to the Internet in the examination of the reports of parties had been accepted by consensus.

13. The new legislation regarding prisons was the Prisons Law (62 (1) 96), as amended by Law No. 12 (1) 97 and the Prisons (General) Regulations of 1997 (121/97) made thereunder. Since the submission of the current report, the prison authorities had decided, for humanitarian reasons, to follow a practice whereby most foreign prisoners were released before completion of their sentence on the basis of a recommendation to the President of the Republic and the Attorney-General and in accordance with article 53 (4) of the Constitution.

14. Her Government, which had ratified the European Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons, had also negotiated a number of bilateral agreements - with the Russian Federation, Egypt and Syria, among other countries - providing for transfer of convicted persons, if they consented, to the country of their nationality.

15. In accordance with General Recommendation XVII adopted by the Committee at its forty-second session in 1993, a decision had been taken by her Government for the establishment of a National Institution for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. That Institution would have competence to: supply information on human rights, participate in the formation of public opinion in furtherance of human rights, promote discussion concerning conditions in Cyprus with regard to human rights, advise the Government on any matter relating to human rights that had been referred to it for consideration, study legislation and administrative arrangements relating to the protection and promotion of human rights and submit relevant reports to the competent authorities, perform any function the Government might delegate to it in relation to the obligations of the Republic under an international human rights instrument, examine complaints of violations of human rights, make recommendations for the harmonization of legislation with international instruments, and liaise with similar institutions abroad. The main non-governmental human rights organizations were the International Association for the Protection of Human Rights in Cyprus, the Committee for the Restoration of Human Rights throughout Cyprus, and the Pan-Cyprian Committee for the Protection of Human Rights. They had been invited to nominate their own representatives in the Institution.

16. In conclusion, her delegation thanked the members of the Committee for their attention and remained at their disposal for any further questions they might wish to ask.

17. Mr. RECHETOV (Country Rapporteur) thanked the Cypriot delegation for submitting an interesting and full report and for its statement containing much additional information. The Cypriot authorities were displaying a strong determination to develop the legislative and administrative framework necessary for implementation of the Convention. It was, of course, regrettable that, because of the Turkish military occupation, the Government was unable to monitor implementation of the Convention's provisions throughout the territory. At its forty-ninth session in 1996, the Committee had adopted

decision 2 (49) in which it had reiterated its concern at the situation in Cyprus. That situation had led to major demographic changes in the occupied areas and, when considering the previous report, the Committee had asked for further information on the country's demographic composition. That information had not been supplied and so he reiterated the request.

18. He drew the attention of members to the core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.28/Rev.1), which contained important information on problems of concern to the Committee, and in particular on demographic distribution by ethnic group. In that connection, the Committee would like to know what was meant by the "Latin" group, who accounted for 0.1 per cent of the population. In paragraph 24 mention was made of expulsions, forcible population displacements, killings and disappearances. Paragraph 25 referred to the policy of systematic destruction of Cyprus's cultural and religious heritage. He requested that further information should be given on all those subjects in Cyprus's next report to the Committee.

19. Turning to the content of the report under consideration (CERD/C/299/Add.19), he said that the new information it contained was particularly noteworthy. Thus it was stated in paragraph 2 that a Law ratifying the amendment to article 8 of the Convention had been enacted, and in paragraph 3 that senior officials from various departments had contributed to the drafting of the report. Those were encouraging indications of the importance Cyprus attached to implementation of the Convention.

20. Although the report's information on new developments was welcome, the absence of information on certain important points was regrettable. For example, the question of the situation of foreign servants and workers was dealt with at some length, but the question (vital for Cyprus and of the greatest interest to the Committee) of the everyday relations between the two main communities on the island was glossed over in a single sentence in paragraph 5. It would seem that the two communities managed to coexist quite peacefully, but information on any friction and means of overcoming it, including judicial decisions, would be more directly linked to the Committee's concerns than the type of information given in paragraph 7 on the problem of the exploitation of women and girls. If that exploitation was not of a racial character, the matter did not fall within the Committee's competence.

21. Implementation of article 5 of the Convention appeared to be satisfactory. Of particular note was the substantial work done by the Cypriot authorities to ensure that all citizens enjoyed their right to equality and to propose the necessary legislative amendments in that area. As could be seen from paragraph 13, for example, legislation was under consideration to provide for the citizenship of a newborn child to be determined by that of the father or the mother on equal terms.

22. The Cypriot Government was also concerned about the situation of foreigners in Cyprus. Ms. Loizidou had given the Committee interesting information on the improvements in the conditions of detention of foreigners, and paragraph 20 of the report stated that the labour laws and regulations applied equally to all workers, whether migrants or Cypriots.

23. The statistical information on government assistance to minorities given in paragraphs 62-65 was particularly relevant. It was, of course, not complete but that was because the Government could not implement the Convention throughout the territory within its jurisdiction.

24. An important factor dividing the Greek and Turkish communities remained, namely the unresolved question of disappeared persons, which was also the subject of an inquiry by Amnesty International. However, the Committee could not but note a definite improvement in the difficult situation which still existed on the island. It must take care to further that improvement by facilitating cooperation with the Cypriot Government by means of pertinent questions and by listening carefully to any requests or suggestions the delegation might make in the course of the forthcoming deliberations.

25. Ms. SADIQ ALI asked why and for what purpose the President of Turkey had recently travelled to the occupied part of Cyprus. She would also like to know from which country the foreign domestic staff mentioned in paragraphs 4, 14 and 15 originated. Lastly, she inquired whether there were plans to teach Cypriot children about Africa, Asia and Latin America. It would appear from the detailed information on the education system that teaching was Eurocentric and disregarded the Third World.

26. Mr. VALENCIA RODRIGUEZ noted with satisfaction that account had been taken in the report of the concluding observations made by the Committee after its consideration of the previous periodic report of Cyprus, that the authors of the report were senior representatives of various departments and that Cyprus had adopted the amendment to article 8 of the Convention.

27. The Bill providing for the protection of refugees was another source of satisfaction. It provided for the establishment of an independent institution on that question, which was fully consistent with the spirit of article 2 of the Convention. It remained to be seen whether it contained provisions that would ensure equal treatment for all refugees, regardless of ethnic or racial origin.

28. As to the implementation of article 4, Law No. 11 of 1992 went in the right direction, and he welcomed the fact that the Cypriot authorities had duly taken into consideration the Committee's observations on certain aspects of that Law, in particular those relating to the use of the Internet.

29. In connection with the implementation of article 5 of the Convention, there appeared to be one problem: the difference in treatment between foreign housemaids and other foreign workers in Cyprus. The former came under the aegis of the Police Authorities and the latter of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. He hoped that the Committee would be informed of the nature of the measures taken to remedy that situation.

30. The report contained little information on the implementation of article 6 of the Convention; paragraphs 16-21 dealt more with articles 4 and 5, but he welcomed the fact that no complaints about racial discrimination, except those relating to a few foreign domestic servants, had been lodged with the courts.

31. In relation to article 7 of the Convention, the information given in paragraphs 31, 33 and 37 of the report was welcome. It was a good thing that any child, regardless of nationality, should be able to receive an education, that he should rapidly learn to speak the language of the country if he came from abroad, and that he should be taught tolerance from his school days. He also welcomed the information given in paragraphs 62-65 of the report on everything that was being done for the various minorities, whether Maronite, Latin, Turkish-Cypriot or Armenian.

32. He noted with pleasure that, generally speaking, human rights were very much to the fore in Cyprus. They were included in teacher training programmes and would soon be included in training for public officers, they were publicized on the occasion of various commemorations and gatherings, and the Convention and the Committee's decisions and observations were widely disseminated, including among the general public.

33. The concern of the Cypriot authorities to avert anything that might lead to racial discrimination was thus self-evident; it was all the more meritorious since, as noted in paragraph 74 of the report, the Government was unable to implement the provisions of the Convention throughout the territory.

34. Mr. de GOUTTES said that the fourteenth periodic report of Cyprus and the oral statements on the situation on the island gave numerous grounds for satisfaction, not the least of which was the regular nature of the dialogue with the Cypriot Government and the relevance of the new information furnished to the Committee. In that respect, he also welcomed the information provided, particularly on the composition of the population, in the core document issued the previous year (HRI/CORE/1/Add.28/Rev.1). Working in the difficult conditions resulting from the lengthy occupation of part of Cyprus by the Turkish forces, the Government was nevertheless endeavouring to put the Convention into effect to the fullest extent possible. He noted in particular the ratification of the amendment to article 8 of the Convention and the declaration made under article 14. He also welcomed the publicity given to the reports and decisions of the Committee, as explained in paragraphs 50 and 51 of the report, and the imminent establishment of a national institution for the protection and promotion of human rights, whose activities would certainly be described in the next periodic report of Cyprus.

35. The authors of the report had taken the very commendable initiative of devoting a section of it (part II) to replies to the questions asked by members of the Committee. That was an example which the Committee might ask other States parties to follow.

36. He would like clarification on two points. First, he was surprised that, despite the situation of conflict in the island, there had been no complaints of discrimination, except those of foreign housemaids. Did that mean that there were really no victims of discrimination? Or could it be concluded that no action was taken on complaints? Secondly, the information contained in paragraph 60 on human rights training for public officers needed to be supplemented in the next periodic report with a description of the measures taken and their results.

37. Mr. YUTZIS asked why it had been deemed necessary to state, in paragraph 12 of the report, that foreigners were able to benefit from the services and functions of the Commissioner for Administration (ombudsman) in the event of indiscretions by public officers. Was that a purely preventive measure or had such cases of indiscretion actually occurred?

38. In accordance with the system in force for the acquisition of citizenship, a newborn child automatically had Cypriot citizenship, provided his father was himself a Cypriot. If his mother was a Cypriot citizen married to a foreigner, the Ministry of the Interior could, at its discretion, grant the child Cypriot citizenship provided the mother submitted an appropriate application. From that it must be concluded that the acquisition of Cypriot citizenship was not automatic. In addition, the question arose whether the procedure applicable to a mother married to a foreigner constituted a benefit or an act of discrimination. The Commissioner for Administration seemed to consider that to be an act of discrimination since he had stated that those provisions ran counter to the spirit of various laws on citizenship and the provisions of the Constitution. What did the delegation think?

39. He was surprised that the inquiries into the dismissal of foreign housemaids should be conducted by the Police Authorities, unlike what was done in the case of all other foreign workers. He asked the delegation whether it shared the view of the Commissioner for Administration, who had stated that that procedure constituted discrimination against foreign housemaids working in Cyprus and was contrary to the letter and spirit of Cypriot laws on foreigners and immigration. What measures did the Government intend to take in order to remedy that situation?

40. Referring to paragraph 59 of the report, in which it was stated that there was only one State-owned radio and television station in Cyprus and that it was run by an independent corporation, he asked whether that meant that there was no State-owned radio.

41. He would also welcome clarification of paragraph 71 of the report, in which it was stated that a Muslim who was not a Turkish Cypriot could not be appointed to public office unless he was a citizen of the Republic. What was the reason for that distinction?

42. Mr. Yutzis took the Chair.

43. Mr. van BOVEN, reverting to the question of foreign housemaids, said that they often had no social, legal or even physical protection because of the inadequacy of regulations in that area. He noted that the opinion of the Commissioner for Administration, referred to in paragraph 14 of the report, was based on Cypriot laws on foreigners and immigration, and asked the delegation what influence the international instruments had had in that case.

44. Cyprus had ratified a large number of international instruments, and he wished to know the status of those instruments in Cypriot law. Mr. Eftychiou had stated that, under article 169 of the Constitution, the force of rules of international law applicable to Cyprus was superior to all domestic legislation or regulations. However, there still seemed to be some uncertainty about the possibility of directly invoking those rules in the

courts. That question had in fact already been raised by the Human Rights Committee in 1994, when it had considered the report submitted by Cyprus under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

45. Article 6 of the Convention provided that States parties must assure to victims of racial discrimination the right to seek just and adequate reparation or satisfaction from the tribunals. What was the situation in Cyprus? In addition, he drew attention to General Recommendation XIII, adopted by the Committee several years before, which related to the training of law enforcement officials in the protection of human rights. That question had also been raised in the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee of 27 July 1994. Could the delegation state whether training of that kind was provided in Cyprus?

46. He welcomed the European Union's initiative in organizing a bicommunal meeting of 50 Cypriot, Greek and Turkish women in Brussels in April 1997. In his view, that type of initiative was essential for the future of the country, and he asked for fuller information on the network of women which had been set up following that meeting.

47. He also welcomed the fact that the reports which Cyprus was required to submit to the international organizations were very widely publicized. When listening to the statement by Ms. Loizidou, he had understood that the same was true of the conclusions adopted by such organizations. Could the delegation confirm that that was the case?

48. Cyprus had made the declaration provided for in article 14 of the Convention, but he noted that no one within its jurisdiction had so far submitted a petition. Was that due to the fact that the procedure was insufficiently well known? If so, could the new institution set up to deal with human rights questions, referred to by Ms. Loizidou, be instrumental in that respect? On the question of that new institution, he emphasized that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was very interested in that type of body and asked whether the competent Cypriot authorities consulted the Office on the question. He would like further information on the very broad powers which the institution would enjoy. In his view, it should disseminate information on the international instruments, publicize the procedure provided for in article 14 of the Convention and, in general, perform an educational role in the area of human rights. Lastly, he wished to know what the composition of the institution would be.

49. Mr. DIACONU expressed regret that the situation in Cyprus was still preventing the Government from implementing the provisions of the Convention throughout the territory.

50. The report gave no information on the distribution of the population according to ethnic origin. Thus, paragraph 62 entitled "Government assistance to minorities" referred to the minority communities without stating what communities they were. The report dealt with religious groups such as Roman Catholics and Muslims but did not mention the ethnic origin of the members of those groups. That was important in the light of the questions relating to the languages of education.

51. He welcomed the fact that the Committee's observations concerning certain expressions contained in Law No. 11 (III) of 1992 had been brought to the attention of the competent authorities. He asked the delegation to state what further action would be taken on that question and to ensure that national legislation was consistent with the provisions of article 4 of the Convention.

52. Lastly, he noted with satisfaction that the Commissioner for Administration provided protection against indiscretions on the part of public officers. He asked whether there were any protective measures against acts of racial discrimination from a private source.

53. Mr. GARVALOV congratulated the Cypriot delegation on the exemplary presentation of its report, in which it had given the Committee useful additional information on the implementation of articles 2, 5 and 7 of the Convention. However, there was no additional information on the implementation of article 4, in which the Committee took a particularly keen interest.

54. He feared that the partition of Cyprus since the Turkish invasion of 1974 might have given rise to a regrettable change in attitudes, notably among the inhabitants of the northern part of the island, which was reflected in acceptance of the status quo.

55. Referring to paragraph 13 of the report, he noted with concern that legal provisions existed relating to the automatic acquisition of Cypriot nationality at birth - a flagrant example of discrimination against children of whom only the mother had Cypriot nationality. Cyprus should remedy that unacceptable state of affairs.

56. He further noted the statement in paragraph 68 of the report that the communities in Cyprus had been divided according to their religious beliefs and not according to their ethnic origin. Knowing that Cyprus had ratified the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1995 (paragraph 72) and that that Convention took account not of religious beliefs but of ethnic groups, he was surprised that Cyprus did not recognize the ethnic character of its constituent communities. He was also surprised to read in paragraph 69 that the minor religious groups had opted to belong to the Greek community on grounds of religion, which might imply that those communities were ethnically homogeneous. What was the exact situation?

57. Lastly, he would like to know the precise reasons why the nomadic gypsies had decided to join the Turkish community and whether all gypsies in Cyprus were Muslims.

58. Mr. SHAHI congratulated the Cypriot delegation on the updated report under consideration. He had noted with particular satisfaction the information given by Ms. Loizidou about the statement made by a Cypriot representative concerning Internet activities at the seminar in which the Committee had participated. He would like to know whether Cyprus had since then enacted laws which made it a criminal offence to use the Internet for the dissemination of racist propaganda. That information was of great importance

since the Committee wanted States parties to communicate to it information on the measures they were taking to combat the use of the Internet for racist purposes.

59. Mr. EFTYCHIOU (Cyprus) said that his delegation would reply at the next meeting to the questions asked by members of the Committee.

60. The Cypriot delegation withdrew.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (agenda item 2)

Preparation for the visit of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

61. The CHAIRMAN invited members of the Committee to discuss the main points they would like to take up with Ms. Mary Robinson, High Commissioner for Human Rights, at the Committee's 1284th meeting on Friday, 7 August 1998. The meeting would be of only one hour's duration.

62. Mr. van BOVEN said that it would be a good idea to raise the question of the development of the services provided to the Committee by the secretariat, and notably the question of the maintenance of the Secretary of the Committee in his present function. The Committee should also ascertain the stage reached in the work on the interdepartmental project set up to coordinate all activities to combat racism and xenophobia undertaken within the High Commissioner's Office. Those activities should, in particular, increase and improve synergy and coordination between the departments dealing with the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and with preparations for the associated World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance and between the work of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance also associated with it and the work of the secretariat and the Committee.

63. Mr. DIACONU said that one of the questions in which the Committee was particularly interested was that of its participation in the future World Conference against Racism. It should therefore discuss with the High Commissioner the recommendations it intended to make on that occasion to States parties to the Convention and organizations in the United Nations system. It should also consider with her the possibility of holding one annual session in New York in order to enable certain States parties which were represented at United Nations Headquarters but not in Geneva to participate in the consideration of their periodic reports.

64. Mr. de GOUTTES supported the proposals made by the other members. On institutional matters, he thought it would be useful to ask the High Commissioner to report on the recent restructuring of her Office and the bodies monitoring the human rights situation and on the merger of the reports of the human rights bodies as referred to in the Alston report, and to give the Committee some information on preparations for the World Conference against Racism.

65. On substantive matters, it would seem particularly important to raise various current questions relating to certain emergency situations of

particular concern to the Committee, notably the situations in Kosovo, the Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to discuss with her what measures should be initiated in that respect. It was particularly important that the Sudan should be included in the list of States to be covered by the early warning measures and the Committee's urgent action procedure.

66. Mr. RECHETOV considered that the situation of Ms. Klein-Bidmon should be taken up with the High Commissioner: she was Acting Chief of the Support Services Branch in the High Commissioner's Office and the Committee had greatly appreciated her competence and devotion to duty. Another question that should be taken up was that of the new conference room which had been assigned to the Committee but which, in his opinion, was unsatisfactory. The High Commissioner would undoubtedly be able to enlighten the Committee as to the reasons and circumstances which had led to that change.

67. Mr. SHAHI associated himself with the proposals made by Mr. de Gouttes concerning the restructuring of the High Commissioner's Office. In his opinion, it would be particularly useful to take up certain substantive questions such as the effectiveness of recent actions and the role of the United Nations in emergency situations where there had been massacres or mass executions connected with inter-ethnic conflicts. Generally speaking, the effectiveness of the United Nations was greatly reduced when inter-communal or inter-ethnic clashes as opposed to international conflicts between States were involved. The Security Council was faced with the question whether it should order operations aimed not at separating the combatants, but at restoring peace.

68. In that connection, it would, in his opinion, be useful to distribute to members of the Committee a particularly interesting analysis by Mr. Brian Urqhart published in the New York Times book review on the necessary evolution of the role of the United Nations in the face of the sudden upsurge in situations of genocide since the end of the cold war. The author invited consideration of measures that would enable the United Nations to increase its effectiveness and thereby avoid being caught unawares, as it had been at the time of the crises in Somalia, Rwanda and, more recently, Kosovo. He requested the secretariat to photocopy and distribute that article.

69. Mr. BANTON suggested that the High Commissioner should give the Committee information on the implementation of the plan of action which had been adopted at the most recent meeting of chairpersons of treaty bodies, with a view to enabling them to respond more effectively to the expectations of States and other interested parties.

70. Replying to Mr. Rechetov, he said that, as Chairman of the Committee, he had been informed of the assignment of a new conference room for the Committee's meetings. Like Mr. Shahi, he doubted whether the Committee would be able to take up all the important questions mentioned in the course of its brief meeting with the High Commissioner.

71. Mr. SHERIFIS said he too doubted whether it would be possible to consider all the important questions of concern to the Committee at the scheduled meeting with the High Commissioner. Those were worldwide problems

having far-reaching, catastrophic consequences, notably the mass population displacements in Africa and the Balkans, whose consideration would necessarily require more time than had been allotted for the meeting. Since consideration would also have to be given to questions relating to the future World Conference against Racism, the proposal to hold one Committee session in New York, the restructuring of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Committee's new conference room, a meeting of sufficient length with the High Commissioner would obviously be necessary.

72. He asked the Chairman whether he was able to say what was the exact situation of the post of representative of the Secretary-General vis-à-vis the Committee and the other treaty bodies.

73. Mr. DIACONU, responding to Mr. Shahi's suggestion, said that it was not the Committee's practice to ask the secretariat to photocopy and distribute newspaper articles, however interesting and useful they might be.

74. The CHAIRMAN proposed that consideration of the question under discussions should be continued at a later meeting of the Committee.

75. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.